31: Hofmann--613-614 N-3 (1909) 1912 Formosans
116, 137, 245, 283

From Kagi we went to Chikutoki; on that stretch the land is level and the railway has already been completed. This region was also still dry, and the natives had not yet tended the fields. A feature characteristic of tropical vegetation is the abundance of palm groves (betel palms); the trees have an average height of seven to eight meters. The Chinese and Malayans chew betel nuts as a stimulant. The vegetation in the river-beds, most of which are dry at this time of the year, is more copious. The plant most frequently found, which is also cultivated artificially, is the large Nephelium longana (called Ryugan by the Chinese and Japanese) the fruits of which are very tasty. There are also large, old Ficus trees, including several varieties of palm trees (Phoenix humilis), Passiflora (Carica Papaya), Anona squamosa, etc; all these are representative of tropical flora. On the barren slopes there are Pandanus tectorius with leaves like pineapple trees; this furnishes a fiber which is used for hats resembling panama hats. The flora on the whole is rich in textile, especially fibrous plants. There are, first of all, the rattan palms with prickly leaves. The tough fiber of this palm is an excellent substitute for hemp and is used for all sorts of household utensils everywhere on Formosa. I did not see artificial plantations of this palm anywhere, however, [614] the Chamaerops excelsa is planted everywhere by the Chinese as a textile plant. The Liquidambar formosana is also planted artificially in this region; the leaves are used as feed for silkworms and the Japanese government expects to develop a successful industry of this plant.